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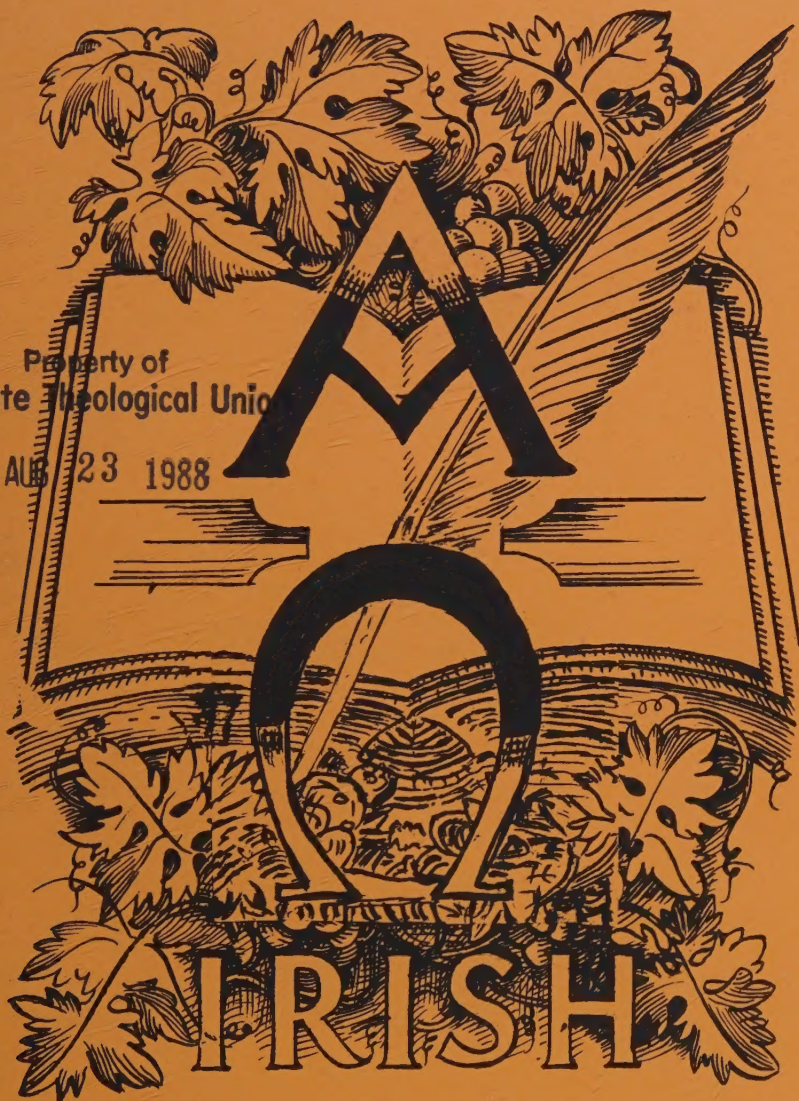
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Union Theological College  
Belfast BT7 1JT

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St Andrews

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Justification by Grace through Faith

Derek Drysdale

The age-old question to which religion addresses itself - and not just Christianity - is the indisputable fact that men and women are in many ways estranged from God their Creator. Even those who do not recognize the being of God are often out of tune with themselves and with creation itself and so demonstrate how deeply this estrangement runs.

In the OT this disruption between the Creator and creation is portrayed through the Genesis saga of the Fall and the disobedience of Adam and Eve with their subsequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

"Thus came sin into our world and all our woe"

This alienation is further symbolized by the story of the Tower of Babel and the escalating confusion and divisions among the peoples of the earth. Out of these divisions grows an inability to communicate, a loss of identity, and a defensive insecurity.

In a book like Amos, for example, we catch sight of those conditions in society that drove the OT prophets to declare a judgment on their times, to call for a return to the ways of the Lord and to seek atonement and the healing of broken relationships. What the prophet saw, as he addressed his word from the Lord to Israel, was not unlike what Charles Dickens saw as he looked out on the England of his day and then put pen to paper to describe the sharp contrast between the comfort and security in the homes of wealthy merchants and the cold hopelessness of the workhouses and debtors' prisons. Or what we see today when we look out from our developed parts of the so-called first and second worlds to the third world. And Amos was no "shrinking violet" when it came to denouncing those who bore most of the blame for the social injustices of his day, and their affront to human dignity. Much of what he saw in the humiliation and deprivations of the poor he attributed to the more powerful in society who lacked compassion

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"Woe to those who turn justice into wormwood,



throwing integrity to the ground," (Amos 5,7) in this sense, Amos undoubtedly had a bias in his message; a bias that contemporary Liberation Theology has understood, the "bias for the poor." However, at a deeper level, behind the actions of selfish, inconsiderate and power-hungry people, that the conditions of injustice in the world, the Bible points to our fallen, sinful nature. Whatever the symptoms, the roots of the disease lie there....back in our primeval rebellion and its contemporary expression in our own existence. And it is this inner condition of the human being that the apostle Paul wrestles with in Romans 5. 1-11, the problem of sin in the individual which must be dealt with before we can come to grips, in any realistic way, with the social, economic, and political structures which so often become expressions of humankind's sinfulness.

#### Is 5. 1-11: Background comments

For anyone acquainted with Paul's doctrine of Justification by Faith, or, more accurately, "justification by faith through faith", where he most clearly sets out what he means by this idea, and they will probably refer you to Romans 5.1-11 among other texts. In actual fact, Romans 5 is written with an assumption: "Therefore since we are justified by faith....." What Paul means by this doctrine has already been expounded in the preceding chapters, and especially 3.21-31 where he deals with the very Jewish concept of "righteousness" and 4.1-25 where he elaborates the theme of "faith"

Let us remind ourselves of what these key words mean, as they are crucial for our understanding of justification.

2. a warning. Personally speaking, I am convinced that even the Reformed Churches can make a very complicated logical jig-saw out of this doctrine of Justification. Many have reservations about that word "doctrine" with reference to Justification. It is, in fact, basically a picture or metaphor: Nevertheless, it is complex in as far as it is earthed in Jewish forensic categories of thought and language., and so its meaning is less than immediate and obvious for us today.

A further complicating factor is when we proceed - as theologians are apt to do - to construct an intricate doctrinal system around justification by faith. Gunther Bornkamm in his book on "Paul" switches on this red light when he writes: "A doctrine of justification that has been banished into a catechism as a proposition or into a treatise on dogmatics as a paragraph is most certainly not the doctrine as Paul knew it." /1, In other words, I am suggesting, at the risk of being simplistic, that the thinking round justification need not be as convoluted an argument as we sometimes imagine it, or, worse, make it.

### Justification

Most if not all of us grasp things more readily through pictures and images that stick in the mind. And the Bible is full of such symbolic analogies. Justification is such a picture, though, of course, it is much more in terms of its expression of a dynamic experience in our relationship with God in Jesus the Christ; but it is essentially a picture. For this reason I think it may well be more accurate in the first instance to speak of the metaphor, rather than the doctrine, of justification in the NT. In Paul's theology, however, the role of justification becomes much more than simply metaphorical.

The Jews were big on Law, and so also on Judgement. Paul had been an orthodox Jew, and indeed an ultra strict Pharisee, and it is this world of law and judgement that lies behind his justification imagery. It may well be that few other aspects of his justification in the gospel mark him out as a former practising Jew so much as this one. Imagine a court scene: we, who know ourselves to be guilty as charged, are brought before the judge. We expect what we deserve; to be sentenced and punished but, wonder of wonders, the judge acquits us and we are free. The judge justifies us and puts us in a new and "right" relationship with himself and with ourselves and offers us a new start.

How we respond to this merciful act - to such grace and such "unmerited favour" - will of course be vital.



The response anticipated is that we will act responsibly, keep faith with the judge's trust in us, so that we are fully set at liberty with a fresh beginning and with hope. This response will set us at one with everything good and right and at peace with ourselves, and reunited with that righteousness from which we have become separated.

That is the picture. And it does it no disservice to say that like every picture it is not "the whole picture" but has its limitations. It helps to interpret the gospel; it does not do the whole job of interpretation.

God, then, as we extend this picture to embrace our experience of him as Christians, is a righteous judge who declares us righteous, so that we share his "righteousness"; "imputed righteousness" is how the old divines interpreted

This is grace: God's gracious act. And to respond by faith, "accepting that we are accepted", as Paul Tillich puts it, is the only response asked of us. There is nothing therefore we have to do to earn this grace; nothing then that we can boast of, for we are asked only to accept this gracious act, to react positively and gratefully to it, and to believe this declaration that we are acquitted and to rest in it.

Faith, then, in this sense, is both obedience and trust; trusting the good Judge at his word, reorientating our life around it and so discovering the moral values and life-style that will follow from it. And at the same time going on to discover too, more and more of the meaning of "this place in which we stand". Justification, therefore, is similar to Reconciliation, which is why the apostle Paul can use them interchangeably; or mix his metaphors if I have put it like that. An example of this interchange is found in Romans 5.9 and 10:

"Since, therefore, we are justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life."

Reconciliation is undoubtedly working with a different picture, the one of estranged friends who have become enemies but who "make it up" and become friends again;

"righting" their "wrong" relationship. Though in the case of God and people, it is always we who have distanced ourselves from him and never God from us. It is God again, however, (the paradox of grace) who moves first to reconcile us to himself; God who is and always has been reconciled to us. How quickly, however, we can begin to "muddy the water" by fusing the imagery, like a bad sermon or homily with too many illustrations. So let us, as we turn briefly now to look at Romans 5. 1-11, hold on to this basically simple picture lying at the heart of justification in its context in Paul's thinking.

### Exposition

According to verse 1, the outcome of justification is Peace.

"Therefore since we are justified by faith,  
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus  
Christ"

The translation "We have peace with God" is, I think, to be preferred to the alternative, "Let us have peace with God". The whole of Paul's argument would seem to be that having been justified we are now at one with God; peace is an actual possession, the fruit of being reconciled. /2 Further, this new state of things is not just a present experience, but is also a future reality. It has eternal significance. We have entered what Paul Tillich calls "the Eternal Now". So as the apostle says, "We rejoice in hope of sharing the glory of God."

Two major problems, however, threaten this "grace in which we stand" and seem to contradict it: suffering and sin. Let us look briefly at them in turn Suffering.

The disturbing question that seems to be lying behind verse three is this: Does suffering not make it impossible to believe in and trust this justifying love of God. And there is no doubt that all of us who are pastors and teachers know only too well that there are few more agonizing and searching questions put to us than this question "Why?" Why do we suffer so? None of us can avoid setting down what the Bible says about God's



Love in the light, or, rather the shade (even the darkness) of our experiences in this world; a world where people die, often miserably and without dignity; a world with the problems of Ethiopia and Lebanon, of Northern Ireland and South Africa, of conflicting ideologies and power blocs which crush the smaller and the weaker; a world where "man's inhumanity to man" is often acted out on a broad stage.

Yet, for all that, Paul's reasoning (indeed experience) here is that when we set down our suffering within the context of our faith, then we can interpret it differently than we do within the context of unbelief. That is not to minimize the mystery of suffering or to sweep aside its many unanswered, and often unanswerable, questions. Through justification the Christian's experience of the world is not now a matter of direct contact, but it is mediated through God's love in Christ. The believer is anchored to what God has done in justifying him or her, and then comes at life and the world with the conviction (born of faith) that there is nothing in "height or depth", in "things present and things to come" that can separate us from the "love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord". In this sense suffering, rather than turning us bitter and away from God, draws us closer to him and to the meaning of the Cross; it may, therefore, as outlined here (v4) "produce endurance, and endurance produce character, and character produce hope...". I am reminded of Hemingway's words in "Call to Arms": "The world breaks everyone, then some become strong at the broken places".

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There is, then, this second problem challenging justification, and it is the question that seems to be lying behind verse 6: "Can I really believe in the justifying love of God when I consider my sins?"

Paul's answer is to ask a further question: Did Jesus Christ die for us only after we had proved ourselves worthy of such a sacrifice? The answer is: not at all, indeed, on the contrary, as we see from verse eight, Christ died for us - this supreme act of God's suffering love - while "we were yet sinners". In the face of the

Cross, then, and before the mystery of Calvary, how can we possibly doubt the love of God for sinners, or imagine that sin can undo the work of grace?

Finally verse ten changes the picture in order to reinforce the argument; Paul takes us into this other metaphor of reconciliation. We who were enemies and strangers from God, have now been reconciled to God. We did not achieve this reconciliation ourselves, for in fact we who remain in sin could not break out of our estrangement. So God in Christ broke into it, coming into our "far country", to bring us home and back to himself.

The passage ends at verse 11 with a note of rejoicing, the song, if you like, of "sinners saved by grace."

**"We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received our reconciliation"**

Some other words come to mind, those of Blaise Pascal, who, after much searching after God and efforts to justify himself, awoke to the miracle of grace and then summed up his experience of God like this, or words to the effect: "Thou wouldst not seek me hadst thou not already found me."

### Concluding Comments and Questions.

All this has, of course, been treating justification on an individual and personal basis; essentially the "I-Thou" relationship. And it must begin there, in your life and mine. The consequences, though, are much wider. Justification takes on social, community, world and even cosmic dimensions, as we find in other parts of the Pauline Corpus like the letters to the Galatians and Colossians. Let me draw out, in conclusion, some questions which arise, it seems to me, from this general exposition of Romans 5.1-11 and the overall theme of justification when viewed from where we are today, and not just where Paul was almost two thousand years ago.

The question has to be posed: is justification still a dynamic model for us today and a living metaphor, as distinct from a dead one, and is it still able to



express our experience of grace in the 1980s? Undoubtedly the power of this picture, in Paul's day and situation, lay in its forensic context. It was a situation in which law and an over scrupulous adherence to it in terms of religious legalism in Judaism, and elements within the early Church too had made of law a moral straitjacket.

Is it possible that what we see around us today is in many respects quite the reverse? Is our problem possibly more one of lawlessness and a critical loss of respect for authority? In a permissive, and now a profane and violent society is our problem not possibly more one of freedom from law, legal and moral, to the point of licence for "anything goes"? If so, to what extent does this change of context, if change it is, make justification a less than immediate and contemporary symbol of salvation?

Perhaps I might suggest also a further question which arises from the ecumenical context of Church life today. If grace means God's unconditional acceptance of us, then "in Christ" we too are called to accept others unconditionally. God's unconditional acceptance means that he accepted us "while we were yet sinners"...and that therefore God did not accept us only after we had made ourselves acceptable to him? Then, by implication it seems to me, that I also as a Presbyterian must accept Roman Catholics unconditionally and "while they are yet Roman Catholics", and Anglicans, "while they are yet Anglicans"... and Methodists, "while they are yet Methodists." And they in turn must accept me "while I am yet a Presbyterian."

What, then, are the implications of Justification by Faith for inter-church relations and what do they bring to the task of ecumenism?

May I also pose a final question which arises out of the evangelistic commission of the Church. I imagine all of us agree that in terms of justification the two essential elements in salvation are divine grace and the human response of faith. But where, I suspect, we may differ is in our understanding and interpretation of the response of faith. Is it primarily an individual decision? Is it a private and personal act arising spontaneously out of moments of revelation and spiritual

awakening, when the gospel of grace lays hold of us? Or is faith, even in its personal aspect, tied more to the community of faith and so arising out of the collective experience and nurture of a shared tradition and belief, and inseparable from the Church's sacramental life, repentance (or conversion) and the disciplines of liturgy and worship? Or is "the variety of religious experience" such that we must allow the response of faith to be capable of expression in various forms none of which may be regarded as exclusive? Here among these questions I imagine the evangelical debate opens up and the concern about how best we are to evangelize the world for Christ; for "I have other sheep" said Jesus, "not of this fold and I must bring them also... so there shall be one flock, one shepherd."

### Notes

1. G. Bornkamm, Paul, (London, 1971<sup>ET</sup>), 135
2. See any reputable commentary on Romans for the differing views on this division of the authorities between "We are at peace" and "Let us continue at peace, or let us have peace"
3. C.K. Barrett, Reading through Romans, (London). 22f

The Rev R. Derek Drysdale is minister of Belmont Presbyterian Church and holds degrees in Arts and Divinity



# The Function of Mathetological Prayer in Mark

Bennie R. Crockett, Jr.

Since the redaction-critical, composition-critical, and literary-critical methodologies became vogue in Markan scholarship, numerous studies have appeared that treat Mark's mathetology (The Gospel writer's view of discipleship). In this study all three methodological approaches are applied to those passages in Mark that have a significant bearing upon an interpretation of the function of mathetological prayer. Through this interpretative procedure, the function and content of mathetological prayer is highlighted. Undoubtedly many interpreters will question such an eclectic methodology, but the nature of this study is suggestive rather than definitive.

In terms of a working definition of prayer, Mark's view of prayer seems to be submission to the will of God, which is submission to the model of self-sacrifice exemplified by the paradigmatic disciple, Jesus (14.36). Thus prayer is an attitude or demonstration of dependence upon God, not dependence upon one's self-sufficiency. The narrative of Mark primarily illustrates two themes in reference to Mathetological prayer: Jesus as the methetological paradigm in prayer and the disciples' utter failure to mimic Jesus' methetological prayer.

Jesus: Paradigmatic Disciple (Mark 1.35; 6.46)

*And very early in the morning before dawn, after he arose, he went out and departed into a lonely place, and there he prayed (1.35)*

*And after he left them, he went away to a mountain in order to pray (6.46)*

John R. Donahue points out that discipleship is not limited only to the twelve disciples in Mark's presentation, but Jesus himself is a disciple, albeit a disciple of God. /1 In parallel expression, recent scholarship on the parables of the Gospels indicates a trend toward designating the person of Jesus as the ultimate parable of God. /2 These two texts (Mk 1.35.

6.46) are important as illustrating the function of Jesus as a paradigm. When read within their context, both verses present Mark's view of correct mathetological prayer. They record that Jesus, in order to pray, withdrew himself from those who were following him. In both contexts, Jesus prayed in a lonely place (1.35) or was alone as he prayed (6.47). Thus the context Mk 1.35) provides helps the reader in formulating a judgment on the reason for Jesus' prayer. According to Mk 1.34, Jesus performed many deeds of the kingdom (1.14,15) and various demons knew his identity because of the deeds. However, Jesus did not permit the demons to reveal his identity even though his fame had spread to all the people throughout the area of Galilee (1.28). From Mk's viewpoint, the withdrawal of Jesus from the crowds for the purpose of prayer functioned as an illustration of Jesus' battle with his identity as Suffering Son of God (1.11) /3 Rather than succumbing to the pressure of allowing his identity to be known, Jesus withdrew himself in order to renew his baptismal commission to suffer as God's Son. Mk's implication of Jesus' refusal to remain where the crowds could reach him (1.36-39) is that for Mark prayer signified Jesus' reaffirmation of his commitment to a suffering role—a role that the crowds obviously were not prepared to affirm.

Further evidence that would support the view that Jesus withdrew from the crowds because of their lack of perception concerning Jesus is apparent in Mk 1.45. Jesus healed a leper (1.40-45) and told him not to say anything about the healing; rather, Jesus charged the man to present himself in the temple so that the priest could pronounce him clean to the congregation (1.44). After Jesus charged the leper, the leper went out and began to tell what had happened to him (1.45). Because of this revelation by the leper, Jesus no longer could enter any town in an open manner. Therefore Jesus withdrew into desert places (ἐν ἔρημοις τόποις), but the crowd continued to pursue him (1.45b). Actually, Jesus withdrew from the crowds because of his fear that the crowds would insist on following him as a result of his wondrous deeds. Jesus, the paradigmatic disciple of God, refused the acclaim of the crowds, for they implicitly perceived him incorrectly as a miracle worker. Mk wished to convey



to the reader through the healing pericope that in the person of Jesus the kingdom of God was appearing. Notwithstanding that editorial viewpoint, Mk also informed the reader that the kingdom would be known primarily in one who would suffer, not solely in a miracle worker.

Deserted place (ἐρημὸς τόπος) functions in a specific manner in Mk's Gospel. The phrase occurs in five places (1.35,45;6.31,32,35), and in each instance it seems to function as a designation for a place where a disciple reaffirmed the true model of discipleship, which for Mk was self-sacrifice. The disciples of Jesus however refused to remain in a "deserted place" because of their rejection of Jesus, who remained in "deserted places", committing himself to self-sacrifice.

After the disciples had returned from their mission tour (6.30), they withdrew themselves to a lonely place upon Jesus' command (6.31). The means by which they withdrew themselves was a boat. Mk's mentioning of a boat signals to the reader a negative characterization of the disciples. In Mk, several boat scenes reveal the disciples' ignorance of Jesus' true identity and their rejection of Jesus' emphasis upon self-sacrifice (4.35-41; 6.45-52;8.10-21). In Mk, when the disciples enter into a boat, they invariably misunderstand and reject Jesus.

According to Mk 6.35 specifically, the disciples did not commit themselves for the benefit of others, for the reader knows from the following verses that Jesus chides the disciples for failing to feed the crowds (6.37). The compassion for others that Jesus demonstrated (6.34) carried with it a commitment to self-sacrifice; the disciples lacked compassion for the crowds (6.35); therefore they refused to remain in the "deserted place." Discipleship in a "deserted place" was reserved for those who followed Jesus' paradigm of self-sacrifice, and according to Mk the disciples never committed themselves to that paradigm.

In Mk 6.46, after the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus charged his disciple to go across the lake to Bethsaida while he dismissed the crowd. When the crowd dispersed, Jesus went up to a mountain to pray. Evidently, Jesus prayed in solitude (6.47). Once again (1.35) Jesus reaffirmed his commitment to suffering

rather than allowing himself to be allured by a following that would not perceive him in terms of his true identity. (4.11) Mk wished to convey to the reader that a genuine disciple (i.e. Jesus) would be willing to remain in a lonely place or in solitude for the purpose of reaffirming prior commitments to God. As a result of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus realized once again that the crowds were following him because of his deeds, not because of who he was. From this interpretative point of view, the crowds function as a foil with which the reader should not identify; the crowds did not know who Jesus was.

Confirmation for this interpretation of prayer in solitude or prayer in a lonely place appears in the contrast between the disciples (6.31,35) and Jesus himself (6.46-47). The disciples apparently wanted to leave the lonely place (6.35-36). According to Mk's view, to remain in a lonely place signified model discipleship (submission to a suffering role model); the disciples consciously avoided such submission to God. Possibly, Jesus' encouragement to the disciples to go with him to a lonely place (6.31) may refer to his attempt to negate the self-inflated egos and attitudes of self-sufficiency that the disciples exhibited upon returning from their mission (6.13,30). /4 In accordance with the rest of Mk's Gospel, the disciples avoided personal identification with Jesus' true vocation and identity as one who would suffer. /5 Mk implied that the disciples refused to remain in a lonely place because they rejected Jesus' true identity of suffering and self-sacrifice.

At this point in the narrative (6.35), Mk seemed to categorize the disciples along with the crowds in terms of not knowing Jesus' true identity. Mk characterized both the disciples and the crowds negatively because of their misapprehension of Jesus, and the reader should not identify with either the disciples or the crowds. The narrative of Mk presents Jesus as the disciple par excellence the paradigmatic mathetological model at prayer. Jesus is the disciple with whom the reader should identify. On the other hand, these texts (1.35; 6.46) illustrate the disciples' failure to follow Jesus' model. Thus, Mk characterized the disciples as failing



in mathetological prayer because they refused to go to the "deserted place" with Jesus, the paradigmatic disciple who would suffer.

#### Mathetological Failure in Prayer (Mk 9.28-29)

*And when he entered into the house, his disciples questioned him privately, "Why were we not able to cast it out? And he said to them, "This kind cannot come out except through prayer.*

The christological emphases in the healing narrative (9.14-29) and the specific textual problem in verse 29 cause many readers to overlook Mk's mathetological emphasis in the larger context (9.17-29). /6

The context given in Mk 9.28-29 is an important factor in understanding Mk's mathetological emphasis on the disciples' inability to heal the epileptic boy. Jesus' healing of the epileptic boy occurs within a broader section of Mk (8.22-10.52) that generally is regarded as a teaching section. /7 In this section Jesus teaches his disciples concerning his identity and requirements for disciples to follow him (despite his teaching, the disciples do not learn from him). The teaching section (8.22-10.52) begins and closes with Jesus' healing of a blind person, through which Mk emphasized the theme of blindness. Through this theme of blindness, Mk openly emphasized the disciples' incomprehension of Jesus' identity. The two Healings function as inclusive brackets around the teaching section which served Mk's mathetological polemic against the disciples. The brackets serve as frames around the intervening material, and the brackets function to provide commentary upon that intervening material. /8 The disciples' blindness (8.22-26; 10.46-52) gave Jesus opportunity to teach them the correct way to see him (8.27-10.45) as one who would suffer. ,

Peter did not see Jesus correctly according to Mk 8.29, since he perceived Jesus as a Messiah who would usher in the kingdom through power rather than self-sacrificial suffering (8.31-32). /9 Jesus rejected

Peter's selfish appeal (8.33), and he actually referred to Peter as Satan himself. According to Jesus, disciples who would not follow him the way of the cross in the way of self-sacrifice were opposed to God (8.33-38). Interestingly, in Mk's framing of the teaching section (8.22-10.52), Jesus taught his disciples three times (8.33;9.31;10.32-34) concerning his self-sacrificial death and resurrection, but they were blind to his teaching. In the Transfiguration narrative (9.2-8), Peter, James and John are privy to Jesus' true identity as Son of God (9.7.). /10 However, the disciples' incomprehension of Jesus' mission is evident in the conclusion of the Transfiguration narrative (9.10) when they question what Jesus meant concerning the resurrection. On a narrative level, the Transfiguration serves as a private (addressed to disciples only), proleptic indication of Jesus' resurrection. The questioning by the disciples indicates their blindness to an understanding of Jesus' mission, Jesus even related the suffering of Elijah (John the Baptist) to the appearance of the suffering Son of Man (9.12-13), yet the disciples remain blind to his identity.

Mark's placement of the healing of the epileptic (9.17-27) illustrates the episodic nature of Mk's story. There seems to be no evident connection between Mk 9.9-13 and 9.14 other than Mk's focus on the disciples' blindness to Jesus' true identity. Beginning in Mk 8.27, the disciples' blindness is emphasized despite Jesus' specific teaching concerning his identity (8.31) and God's identification of Jesus as God (9.7). Through the negative characterization of the disciples (9.18-19; 28-29) Mk focusses the reader's attention on the disciples in the story of the healing of the epileptic. The disciples attempted to cast out the dumb spirit from the boy, but they were not able (9.18); as a result of their failure, Jesus identified the disciples as an unfaithful generation (9.19). Clearly, the Markan emphasis in these verses is mathetological failure, not christological identity. /11 The Markan addition (9.28-29) to the healing is a mathetological comment that portrays the disciples in a negative light, since they did not rely upon God's faithfulness through prayer (submission to God). Exhibition of



attitudinal self-sufficiency in the attempt to heal the epileptic caused the disciples to be powerless (οὐκ ἔλαχσαν ;9.18). Therefore, in Mk 9.18-19, 28-29 the emphasis lies on the disciples' inability and unwillingness to pray (submit in faith to God) as the cause of their failure to heal the epileptic boy.

Nk 9.17 29 reveals the disciples' failure in prayer at several points. First, the disciples are contrasted with Jesus (the paradigmatic disciple), who was able to cast out the unclean spirit ((.18,26). Jesus' statement "All things are possible to the one who has faith" (9.23), is a statement about his own (Jesus') immediate ability to heal the child; the disciples did not have faith(9.19) because they did not rely on God in prayer (9.29). The reader of Mk's Gospel knows that Jesus is he who submits himself to God in prayer/faith. Second the disciples are contrasted with the father of the child. That is the father of the child exhibits faith in and submission to Jesus (9.24), yet Jesus refers to the disciples as a "faithless generation" (9.19). Simply stated, the disciples could not heal the child because of their inability to pray, which was the direct result of their faithlessness (9.18-19, 29) . The disciples did not pray in order to allow God to heal the child; rather, they took upon themselves to heal the child from their own sufficiency, which Jesus condemned as faithlessness.

The obtuseness and demonstration of self-sufficiency by the disciples is highlighted in the remainder of the teaching section (9.30-10.52). After Jesus taught the disciples a second time concerning his death and resurrection, the disciples began to argue about who was the greatest among themselves (9.30 34) The disciples also forbade another person from casting out demons in Jesus' name because that exorcist "was not following us (disciples)" (9.38)! Obviously other followers of Jesus had faith in God, unlike the disciples. The Evangelist seems to indicate in Mk 9.18 19, 38 41 that if the disciples were unable to cast out demons because of faithlessness, then they were going to enforce their faithlessness on other followers of Jesus who did have faith in him. Moreover, immediately following Jesus'

third statement concerning his death and resurrection, two disciples requested from Jesus a place of prominence in his glory (10.35-37). By placing the disciples' misinformed responses after Jesus' teachings on self-sacrifice, Mk conveyed to the reader the theme of the disciples' blindness and unwillingness to see Jesus correctly.

#### Jesus' Teaching on Mathetological Prayer (Mk 11.24-25)

*Because of this I say to you, for whatever you pray and ask, believe that you have received, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone so that your father also who is in heaven may forgive your transgressions.* (11.24-25)

Many interpreters note the change of tone in the narrative of Mk between chap. 10 and chap 11. At Mk 11.1 the scene changes from Jesus and his disciples on their way to Jerusalem (8.22-10.52) to their approach into Jerusalem, Jesus' place of suffering. While within the confines of the holy city, Jesus instructed the religious leaders about his view of the temple (11.17), yet he also instructed his disciples concerning the true nature of mathetological prayer. (11.24-25)

The encouragement to prayer in Mk 11.24-25 occurs within the immediate section of the cursing of the fig-tree and Jesus' cleansing of the temple. Stephen Hre Kio points out Mk's technique of intercalation in Mk 11, in addition to concluding that Mk viewed prayer as having primary effectiveness through faith in God (11.22). /12

For the purpose of this study, the specific mathetological importance of prayer in Mk 11.24-25 is apparent in the connection between the use of πιστεῖν in vs 22 and the use of πιστεύειν in vs 24. Jesus commanded the disciples "Have faith in God" (11.22). If the disciples would have submitted to God, then they would have trusted that they would receive whatever they asked of God (11.24). The entire section (11.12-25) emphasizes the power of God, not the power of a disciple's faith. Kio insists that the editorial and theological emphasis in Mk 11 falls upon the



meaning of the temple. /13 Nevertheless, there also appears an editorial emphasis upon the mathetological theme of prayer. Jesus' cursing of the fig tree (11.12-14) surely involves some sense of Mk's polemic against the inadequacy of Judaism since he demonstrated that inadequacy through Jesus' cleansing of the temple (11.15-19). Also, the lesson from the fig-tree (11.20-25) emphasizes Jesus' demand for the disciples' utter reliance upon God (11.22) rather than upon the religious leaders whom Mk alluded to through the symbol of the temple (11.18)

The assumptions behind Jesus' statement "Have faith in God" (11.22) affect a correct interpretation of the statement. Without doubt, Mk conveyed the view that the disciples were without πίστις (4.40; 11.22), yet other characters in the narrative exhibit πίστις (2.5; 5.34; 9.24, 42; 10.52) One assumption behind Jesus' statement in Mk 11.22 is that the disciples did not have any faith in the person of Jesus. Related to that would be a second assumption that the disciples misunderstood the true nature of faith as is evident from Mk 9.19, a text in which Jesus is reported to have referred to the disciples as a "faithless generation." In Mk 9.19 the disciples' faithlessness constitutes a failure on their part to rely on the character of God for the working of a deed of healing. The disciples did not entrust themselves to God or Jesus, God's mathetological paradigm; the disciples were faithless.

In the light of the preceding linguistic parallels, the mathetological intention in Mk 11.24-25 seems to be as follows. To believe that one receives through prayer according to a faith commitment (11.25) assumes that a disciple has faith in God (11.22); by definition in Mk, faith in God necessarily carries with it a spirit of submission to the will of God. Submission to the will of God (faith) consequently is the primary characteristic of true prayer in Mk's mathetology. God grants the prayers of true disciples (11.24) because their prayers are prayed in a spirit of submission to the will of God; the prayers are not offered from a spirit of self-sufficiency (9.18-19, 28-29), Mk therefore presented Jesus' view of ideal

mathetological prayer as that which is offered in a spirit of utter dependence on God,

### Mathetological Foreshadowings of Gethsemane

For the purpose of this study, the Gethsemane narrative is the most important text for an understanding of mathetological prayer in Mk. The entire narrative of Mk moves toward the climax of Jesus' suffering and death, and the Gethsemane narrative illustrates the two primary themes elucidated above: Jesus as the paradigmatic mathetological model and the disciples as mathetological failures. Related to those themes of course is the issue that Jesus demonstrated his previous teaching concerning ideal mathetological prayer (11.24-25) while the disciples rejected his example of faith in God.

The Passion Narrative technically begins at Mk 14.1, but many interpreters point out that Mk's entire story is under the dark shadow of Jesus' Passion. Nevertheless, there is ample material within the Passion narrative itself that reveals mathetological interests. /14 The teaching section (8.22-10.52) conveys to the reader that the disciples did not understand Jesus on his terms of self-sacrifice. That misunderstanding or rejection comes to fruition in the Gethsemane setting. Actually in Mk the disciples never understand Jesus' true identity and mission. /15 In the Passion Narrative the disciples reveal what they really believe and who they really are through their disloyalty to Jesus (14.32-42, 52).

In order to give due attention to the text of Mk in reference to the disciples' ultimate misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus in Gethsemane, it is helpful to review the negative portrayal of the disciples that Mk presents. Mk's negative portrayal of the disciples prepares the reader for their ultimate misapprehension and denial of Jesus. There are many passages in Mk, other than those discussed above (1.35; 6.46; 9.28-29), that illustrate the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus.

Although Jesus taught his disciples in private (a benefit not afforded the crowds), the disciples lacked faith and understanding of Jesus' person when they encountered a storm on the lake (4.34, 38, 40-41). /16



In two other boat scenes (6.45-52; 8.13-21) the disciples do not trust Jesus or understand who he is; that lack of faith and understanding yields Peter's inadequate confession of Jesus' identity (8.29). Mk characterized the disciples in like manner to the crowds who received Jesus' teaching but who also hardened their hearts against the truth (4.12; 6.52; 8.17-18). /17 A similar comparison of the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus and the crowds' misunderstanding of Jesus also appears in Mk 7.17-18; the crowds obviously did not understand Jesus' parables and possibly were not supposed to understand them (4.12). In contrast to the crowds, the disciples (without the benefit of parables) ideally should have had complete insight into the person of Jesus, but even they who received the secret of the kingdom could not understand Jesus' parables (7.17-18).

Peter's inadequate view of Jesus (8.29; 32-33) seemingly was shared by the other disciples because after Jesus' second Passion prediction the disciples are reported to have misunderstood Jesus<sup>h</sup> saying (9.32,34). That misunderstanding grew to the point that the disciples forbade a man from casting out demons in Jesus' name (9.38); the disciples are portrayed as opposing the deeds of the kingdom! That particular characterization is enlarged when the disciples are reported to have rebuked persons who brought their sick children to Jesus (10.13). Obviously the disciples had not learnt the meaning of servanthood when Jesus taught them about servanthood through the object lesson of receiving a child; on the contrary, the disciples had been discussing who was the greatest ((.33-37)! Two disciples continued in such self-inflated egotism after Jesus<sup>h</sup> third prediction of his suffering (10.35-40). The disciples<sup>h</sup> misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus<sup>h</sup> emphasis on his death in the three Passion predictions (8.31; 9.31; 10.33-34) precede Mk's accounts of the disciples<sup>h</sup> self-centred inclinations (8.32-33; 9.33-34; 10.35-37). In like manner Jesus<sup>h</sup> inference concerning his death (14.27) precedes the egotism of Peter and the other disciples (14.29,31) as well as the disciples<sup>h</sup> selfish inclinations in the garden of Gethsemane.

(14.32-42). Jesus' statements concerning suffering and self-sacrifice caused the disciples to react with a demonstration of self-preservation and self-sufficiency (cf. 8.34-38). Furthermore it is possible to understand the occurrence of πολλοί in Mk 10.48 as a reference including some of the disciples who possibly joined in the rebuke of blind Bartimaeus from having contact with Jesus. Based on Mk's pre-Passion narration about the disciples, the reader expects the worst from the disciples at the time of Jesus' Passion.

Prior to the Gethsemane narrative within the Passion narrative itself, there are foreshadowings of the disciples' ultimate rejection of Jesus (14.50). Some of the disciples became angry as Jesus was anointed with costly ointment (14.4-5) because that anointing signalled his death, an event the disciples abhorred. Judas, one of the twelve, planned to betray Jesus to the Jewish leaders (14.10-11). Jesus predicted that all of the disciples would fall away when he would be struck (14.27). Also Jesus predicted that Peter would deny him three times (14.31). Actually Peter denied Jesus three times on two separate occasions (in Gethsemane, 14.32-42; and in the courtyard, 14.66-72), though Mark highlighted the second occasion with a comment about the fulfilment of Jesus' prediction (14.72). On both occasions nonetheless Peter revealed a lack of commitment to Jesus' acceptance of suffering and death as determining one's true identity. The irony of the characterization of Peter is that Mk portrayed him as saying he would not fall away from Jesus, nor would he deny Jesus (14.29,31). Mk also portrayed the other disciples ironically when he included the editorial comment about their confidence in not denying Jesus (14.31). Consequently, both Peter and the other disciples fell away from Jesus and denied him (14.32-42, 50, 66-72).

So, by the time of the narration of Jesus' arrest, the disciples' early misunderstanding of Jesus (4.10-12,33-34, 41; 6.52; 7.17-18; 8.17,21,29-31; 9.10; 10.13-15) had turned into open rejection of Jesus (14.50). The Passion of Jesus forced the disciples into an ultimate decision concerning their loyalty to him. Their fateful problem was that they misunderstood Jesus' identity because of



their selfish inclinations and egotistical ambitions; that misunderstanding caused them to reject Jesus,

### Gethsemane: Mathetological Climax (Mk 14.32-42)

And they came into the place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And he took with him Peter James and John, and he began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very saddened unto death; remain here and watch!" And after he went on a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed so that, if it were possible, for the hour to pass from him. And he said, "Abba, father, all things are possible for you; remove this cup from me, but not what I desire, rather what you desire." And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Are you not able to watch one hour? Watch and pray so that you may not enter into temptation; 'The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.'" And after he went away again, he prayed, saying the same prayer. And when he came again to them he found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy with sleep, and they did not know what to answer him. And he came a third time, and he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and relaxing? It is enough! The hour has come, and behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us go. Look, my betrayer has arrived". (14.32-42)

The Gethsemane prayer (14.32-42) is the key pericope for an understanding of Mk's view of mathetological prayer. Because of a priori christological questions surrounding the presentation of Jesus' Gethsemane experience, many interpreters disregard Mk's mathetological emphasis in 14.32-42. /17 Consequently, christological questions that interpreters apply to the text of Mk 14.32-42 yield interpretative fruit that Mk probably did not intend. The Gethsemane narrative is paradigmatic for an understanding of mathetological prayer in Mk for several reasons. First, the narrative reveals Jesus as the disciple par excellence in terms of genuine prayer (submission to God's will). Second, the narrative conveys the disciples' real disloyalty to Jesus by revealing their failure in mathetological prayer. And third, from the larger story line of Mk, Gethsemane functions as the place of all of the disciples' rejection of Jesus (14.50), and thus the Gethsemane narrative brings the relationship of the disciples of Jesus to a negative climax.

The setting for Jesus' prayer, the disciples' failure

at prayer, the disciples' rejection of Jesus (14.32-42,50), Jesus' arrest; (14.43-49) are in the garden of Gethsemane. Not only did Judas betray Jesus in Gethsemane (14.44-45), but all of Jesus' disciples forsook him there, and they ran away from Jesus (14.50). So in essence, all of Jesus' disciples rejected and betrayed him because none of them remained with him in his "hour". In the overall story of Mk's Gospel, the negative characterization of the disciples is most acute in the Gethsemane setting (14.32-51).

After Jesus and his disciples had observed the Passover meal (14.12-24), they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus then instructed them that he, the shepherd, would be struck, and that they, the sheep, would scatter (14.26). Despite the negative tone, however, Jesus also promised the disciples that he would see them in Galilee after his resurrection, (14.27). Peter confidently boasted that he would never fall away from Jesus (14.28), which gave Jesus the opportunity to predict Peter's fateful denial (14.10). Once again, despite Jesus' negative tone, Peter boasted that he would never deny Jesus (14.31); the other disciples likewise boasted (14.31b). Jesus' prediction about the sheep (disciples) being scattered came to fulfilment when the guards seized him, the shepherd (14.46-50). Furthermore, Peter's boast that he would never deny Jesus but die with him (14.31) was nullified through his failure to stay awake and pray when Jesus prayed (14.32-42). The reader does not have to await Peter's threefold denial (14.66-72) in order to observe Peter's denial of Jesus through self-pleasing and self-preserving sleep (14.32-42).

Mk 14.36 is assumed throughout this study to be the normative definition and demonstration of genuine mathetological prayer. According to Mk 14.36 Jesus as the disciple of God committed himself to accepting the cup of suffering and death that God required of him. Jesus, who is the paradigmatic disciple in Mark, demonstrated the genuine content of mathetological prayer. As Mk characterized Jesus, the reader understands the content of such prayer is submission to the will of God regardless of one's personal prejudices; in the case of Jesus' discipleship, his personal preference was for God to remove the obstacle of suffering and death (14.35-36a).

Nevertheless, Jesus prayed the ideal mathetological prayer when he said, "but not what I desire, rather what you (God) desire" (14.36b). Submission to God's will should be a disciple's ultimate objective according to Mk since Jesus, the paradigmatic disciple, characterizes that objective.

The incorrect mathetological approach to prayer is evident from the Gethsemane narrative through a contrast of Jesus' threefold prayer (14.32,35,39) with Jesus' three statements to the disciples (14.34b,40a,41a) /19 Editorial work in Mk 14.32-42 is apparent to many interpreters, and a simple tabulation of the words in Mk 14.32-42 reveals that the editor's purpose was as important as the inclusion of the words of Jesus even if one were to presume that all the words attributed to Jesus in Mk 14.32-42 were his exact words. /20 Peter's threefold commitment to sleep conveys that he and the other disciples were actually denying Jesus (14.30), their sleep being a symbol of their having succumbed to temptation, rejection and the betrayal of Jesus (14.38,41)

In Mk's mathetology "sleep" represents a lax commitment to correct discipleship. In Mk 13.36 "sleep" is a negative characteristic of a disciple who was not prepared for the return of the master of the house from a journey. Rather than sleeping that disciple should "watch" or "stay awake" (13.33,35,37) for the return of the master of the house (13.35); the same idea about "watch" is conveyed in Mk 14.38. The occurrences of *γρηγορέω* here relates to the view that a disciple is in a state of submission to God when he "watches" or "stays awake" (Mk used *γρηγορεῖτε(καὶ)προσεύχεσθε* as a hendiadys). If a disciple "prays", then such a disciple also "watches" or "stays awake". Thus it would seem to follow that the reason for the disciples sleeping in Gethsemane was due to their non-commitment to prayer (submission to God). Such sleeping signals to the reader that they had rejected Jesus and his mission of suffering and death. In Gethsemane, it could be said, that the disciples slept to preserve their lives rather than submitting them as sacrifices to God through prayer. The disciples' sleep indicates rejection of Jesus and their unwillingness to align themselves with his commitment to self-sacrifice.



Within the confines of the holy city, Jerusalem, the disciples had the opportunity to demonstrate that they had learnt Jesus' teaching about ideal prayer (11.24-25). Yet they rejected Jesus' demands to submit themselves to a role of suffering and death by their choice of sleep (faithlessness) over prayer (faith).

## Conclusion

Through this study of selected passages in prayer in Mk's Gospel, several themes become evident. First, mathetological prayer always contains an element of submission to the will of God or trust in the character and action of God rather than reliance upon self-sufficiency. Second, Jesus is the paradigm for such prayer in Mk; thus all the other disciples contrast with Jesus' commitment (14.36) to God. Third, the disciples rejected Jesus' paradigmatic demonstration of prayer; they chose to follow their own inclinations and thus they reveal they are not loyal to Jesus nor did they follow him with understanding. Their disloyalty is observable most acutely in Mk 14.50: "And they all forsook him and ran away".

In Mk, therefore, the function of mathetological prayer illustrates a disciple's commitments whether to selfish motive (ie the disciples) or to the self-sacrificial demand of God (ie, Jesus)

## Notes

1. J.R. Donahue, "The Revelation of God in the Gospel of Mk", Modern Scholarship: Its Impact on Theology & Proclamation, ed. P.A. Eigo (Villanova 1984) 168-69
2. Donahue, op.cit for a survey of the literature. This new trend reveals the recent reaction against a reductionist historical interpretation of Jesus' parables
3. The fusion of Ps.2.7 and Isa 42.1 in Mk 1.11 conveys the correct view of Jesus' identity as the Son of God who suffers on behalf of his people. Only Jesus with some exceptions knows his own identity but the disciples refuse to learn of Jesus' identity by following him to death
4. C.E.B. Cranfield, The Gospel According to Saint Mark (Cambridge 1959) 301
5. See Mk 4.17; 6.52; 8.17-21, 32; 9.18, 29, 32, 34, 38; 10.13, 35-37; 14.4-5, 32-42, 44-45, 50, 66-72
6. For a concise treatment of the christological emphases in Mk 9.14-29 see W.L. Lane, The Gospel of Mark, NICNT (Grand Rapids 1974) 329-35
7. W.H. Kelber, Mk's story of Jesus (Philadelphia, 1979) 43

8. D. Rhoads & D. Michie, Mark as Story (Philadelphia 1982), 51  
The book deals with isolated frames (6.21-43), but the literary technique of framing is also evident in broader sections within the narrative (822-10.52)
9. J.B. Tyson, "The Blindness of the Disciples in Mk", JBL, 262  
refers to the disciples expecting a royal messiah, not a suffering Messiah which seems to be Mk's perspective of Jesus.
10. See J.D. Kingsbury, The Christology of Mk's Gospel (Philadelphia 1983) 91-102 for a survey of this issue.
11. This interpretation may preclude an identification of Jesus in terms of a hellenistic theios anēr; for this view in Mk see R. Bultmann, The History of the Synoptic Tradition, (ET NYork 1963) 347. Among the more recent writings on theios anēr cf P.J. Achtmeier, "Gospel Miracle Tradition and the Divine Man" INT 26, 1972, 174-97; C.H. Holladay, Theios Aner in Hellenistic Judaism: A Critique of the Use of This Category in NT Christology. SBLDS 40 (Missoula 1977); and J.D. Kingsbury, "The 'Divine Man' as the Key to Mk's Christology --The End of an Era?" INT 35, 1981, 243-57
12. S.H. Kio, "A Prayer Framework in Mk 11", BT 37, 1986, 323-28 .  
Kio rightly points out that true prayer carries with it horizontal responsibility, namely, the forgiveness of others.
13. Kio, op.cit. 324
14. Mk 14.10-11, 12-16, 17-21, 22-25, 26-31, 32-42, 43-44, 51, 53, 66-72; 15.40-41
15. See E. Best, "The Miracles in Mk", RevExp 75, 1978, 543.  
According to Mk, the disciples' understanding of Jesus' true identity is implied rather than stated. In all probability the author of Mk and the original audience assumed the resurrection of Jesus; cf. R.H. Lightfoot, The Gospel Message of Mk (Oxford 1950), 95
16. See Mk 4.10, 34; 6.31-32; 7.17; 9.2, 28, 33; 10.10; 13.3
17. For a perceptive proposal of the disciples' conscious rejection of true knowledge of Jesus rather than mere misunderstanding, see J.B. Gibson. "The Rebuke of the Disciples in Mk 8.14-21," JSNT 27, 1986, 31-47.
18. Mk's primary focus in the Gethsemane narrative is mathetology, not christology. The disciples' inability and unwillingness to stay awake is contrasted with Jesus' model for discipleship.
19. Note the connection between Mk 9.18 (ouk ischusan) and Mk 14.37 (ouki ischusas). In both cases the inability of the disciples is the result of their rejection of the mathetological model of faith/prayer
20. In the UBS Greek text (3rd corr. ed.) there are 96 words attributed to the narrator and 85 to Jesus in Mk 14.32-42. For a thorough redaction-critical treatment of Mk 14.32-42, see W.H. Kelber, "The Hour of the Son of Man and the Temptation of the Disciples (Mk 14.32-42), The Passion in Mk ;studies in Mk 14-16, ed. W.H. Kelber (Philadelphia 1976) 41-60

Dr Bennie R. Crockett Jr, Th.D is lecturer in the  
Dept of Biblical Studies, Wm Carey College, Hattiesburg  
U.S.A.

The So-Called Succession Narrative:

A Reappraisal of Rost's Approach to Theme in II Samuel 9-20  
and I Kings 1-2

Gillian Key

The title 'Succession Narrative' leaves little to the imagination, at least as regards theme; and indeed the phrase used in the title of this paper ('the So-Called Succession Narrative') must leave little doubt as to the subject matter under consideration. Nevertheless let us begin by clarifying our aims and objectives here: in this paper we will examine the theme of the material which has become known as the Succession Narrative, and attempt to determine if a succession theme accurately reflects the content of II Samuel 9-20 and I Kings 1-2. However because of the limitations of time, and because of the involvement of other issues, we will not attempt to offer any comprehensive alternative approach. Rather we will confine ourselves to a reappraisal of the succession theme as presented by Rost.

Leonhard Rost is the outstanding figure in the study of the Succession Narrative. Since his Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids /1/ was first published in 1926, his views have almost completely dominated scholarship in this area. Although several of his ideas had been suggested at an earlier date, notably by Wellhausen /2/, Rost's work succeeded in popularizing these and in superseding all the other views which were current at that time.

The pivotal point in Rost's argument was his perception of the succession to the throne of David as the overriding theme of this work. He began with the first two chapters of Kings, taking the statement in I Kings 1:

"Who shall sit upon the throne of my lord the king,  
and who shall reign after him?"

as the verbal expression of the theme of the entire narrative. From here he traced the extent of the work,



concluding that it comprised II Samuel 6:16,20-23 (the Michal story); 7:11b, 16 (the core of the dynastic oracle); 9-20; and I Kings 1-2. However perhaps we should point out that subsequent writers have not always followed Rost in linking chapters 6 and 7 with the Succession Narrative. Therefore for the purpose of greater clarity, we will treat the Succession Narrative (or SN, as we will sometimes refer to it) as comprising II Sam.9-20 and I Kings 1-2.

Rost saw the entire work as an exploration of the question as to who would succeed to the throne of David. However he argued that this theme in turn comprised two major branches: the background to the successor (that is, Solomon), and the background to the actual succession. The background to the successor consisted of II Sam.10-12: the account of the Ammonite Wars, David's adultery, his murder of Uriah and the birth of Solomon. The background to the succession consisted of the remainder of the material /3/. Thus Rost saw the narrative as a record of the elimination of each of the various candidates for the throne up until the eventual emergence of Solomon as the heir to his father's domain.

Because of the nature of the material, in that it deals with what are essentially private events, he argued that it could only have been the product of an eyewitness - a member of the Courts of David and Solomon. Therefore he dated the composition of the narrative to the early years of Solomon's reign, seeing it as political propaganda, whose purpose was to glorify Solomon.

In many ways the popularity of Rost's hypothesis may be credited to its plausibility: certainly if we take II Sam.9-20 and I Kings 1-2 together, the resulting unit records the deaths of three of David's sons and the succession of a younger brother. But are we following blindly in Rost's footsteps by treating this material as a unity? And is the very fact that we employ the term Succession Narrative another example of our begging the question? This is the contention of Ackroyd /4/, who in a

recent article asserted:

"If our reading and response are to be with fullest effect, we must not be hindered by restrictions imposed by artificial and hypothetical categorizing of the text; and one such may appear to have been the supposition that there is an identifiable unit to be described as the 'succession narrative,' when, in reality, such a unit is to be seen rather as the product of a too narrow reading and too great a desire to find uniformity where there is in reality diversity and richness. A less rigid reading may open up a wider perspective" /5/.

He stresses the fact that the Succession Narrative Hypothesis is simply a hypothesis, and that it must not be accorded more respect than its theoretical nature warrant. Again he argues:

"No hypothesis in Old Testament scholarship which reaches such a status must be allowed to go unquestioned, not because such questioning provides fodder for doctoral theses, but because a hypothesis must never be allowed to become more than it really is" /6/.

Yet it seems that many have fallen into the trap of forgetting that this is only a hypothesis and have accepted Rost's conclusions unquestioningly.

There have, of course, been those who have objected particular aspects of Rost's hypothesis, and in recent years such arguments have become more numerous. However few have moved so far from Rost's position as to break completely with the idea of a Succession Narrative. Yet one of those who has done so is Carlson /7/. Adopting the traditio-historical approach of the Uppsala School, he argued for a large portion of Deuteronomistic editing and interpolation in II Samuel. Thence he proposed that the book as a whole divided naturally into two sections. The first eight chapters were concerned with David under the Blessing (because of his obedience to Yahweh), while the remainder of the book showed David under the Curse (as the result of his disobedience). However his views have had

significant impact in altering the general emphasis or approach.

Nevertheless others have suggested modifications to Rost's view of the theme of the narrative. Blenkinsopp /8/ and Lanagan /9/ have argued for the isolation of two distinct themes within the document (a court theme and a succession theme). Hagan /10/ has argued that there are other themes within the narrative, as well as that of succession; and more recently both Gunn /11/ and Fokkleman /12/ have proposed that the title 'Succession Narrative' is not an appropriate heading for this material.

Thus we approach the succession theme against a background of scholarship which is not entirely uncritical of Rost's proposal. However despite the views of individual scholars, the general consensus of opinion still holds to Rost's original hypothesis.

Let us turn then to look at the theme of the work. We cannot and should not attempt to deny that when viewed in the context of the accession in I Kings 1, SN provides a background to Solomon's position as heir by recounting the deaths of three of his older brothers (Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah) and two potential usurpers (Mephibosheth and Rimmon ben Gera). However this is only a partial background. Although it appears to have gone unnoticed, we may observe that nowhere does the Succession Narrative attempt to record the full story of the succession.

I Samuel 3:2-5 lists David's first six sons in order of birth as Amnon, Chileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah and Ishbosheth, while II Sam.5:14-16 lists the sons subsequently born to him in Jerusalem as Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet. If the second list is also in order of birth, as would seem most likely, then Solomon is the tenth of these seventeen sons /13/. Thus six of Solomon's older brothers are not accounted for /14/. It has been suggested



that I Kings 1:5ff. implies the early death of Chileab /15/, but this need not necessarily be the case and is nevertheless not of particular significance to the question, for there remain five other older sons whose deaths are neither recorded nor implied. Thus if SN is indeed a narrative of succession it tells an incomplete story, for it only accounts for the elimination of three of the nine possible candidates for the throne who were born before Solomon.

Rost and those who have followed him in designating the main theme of the work as 'succession' base their analysis on the assumption that the principle of primogeniture was already established in Israel, and that the accession of Solomon must entail the demise of his older brothers. However there is no evidence that this was necessarily the case, especially as no other son had succeeded his father to the throne of Israel. Indeed II Samuel 7 indicates that even the principle of a hereditary monarchy had not yet been established.

With regard to the inheritance of property, it appears that in Israel the general practice was that on the death of the father his assets were divided between all his sons, with the firstborn receiving twice as much as each of the others /16/. However there are exceptions to this rule, such as in the case of Jephthah, possibly the eldest son of his father, who was deprived of his rights of inheritance by the mutual agreement of his brothers (Judges 11:1f) /17/. Thus it is probable that even in the normal course of events the firstborn was not invariably the chief beneficiary of his father's estate.

We may consider that the idea of the inheritance of the firstborn in Rost's work comes from analogy with the status of Jonathan as heir apparent in I Samuel. However it is equally possible that Jonathan's position as heir derived not from the fact that he was Saul's eldest son, but as a result of his exploits and ability in battle, and his popularity with the people /18/. Yet even if Jonathan was

ul's heir because he was his eldest son, it does not allow that David's sons should have priority in order of birth. Indeed perhaps we should note that according to I Samuel 16, David himself was the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse.

ving thus established a fundamental difficulty with the overall concept of this material as a succession narrative, we now look more closely at the arguments which have given rise to this view. Perhaps one of the strongest points in favour of Rost's succession theme is that he finds the idea expressly and repeatedly stated in I Kings 1. He says:

"And set in this framework...we have the insistent question: 'Who shall sit upon the throne of my lord the king, and who shall reign after him?' Nathan's conversation with Bathsheba and their talk with David, David's order to Zadok, Nathan and Benaiah, and finally Jonathan's report to those banqueting around Adonijah's table, all centre on this question in agitated excitement. The whole action of the drama revolves around these disquieting words. The whole chapter is dominated by them - and not only the whole chapter, but...the whole work" /19/.

us he presents the question "Who shall sit upon the throne of my lord the king, and who shall reign after him?" as a direct quotation used repeatedly in I Kings 1. That this is taken directly from the text has added much weight to his argument and has led most scholars to adopt his approach while rejecting views which vary the nuance of the theme /20/.

Nevertheless despite Rost's implication, this is not a direct quotation from the Massoretic text. Although the English version of Die Überlieferung translates these words, the German editions quote them in Hebrew. Here Rost gives as a transcription from the text of I Kings 1:

מי ישב על-כסא אדני המלך ומי ימלך אחריי

However this does not appear anywhere in the chapter.

The language closest to it is found within the statements of Bathsheba and Nathan in v.20 and v.27 respectively. Here the Hebrew reads:

מי ישב על-כסא אדני-המלך אחרי

This comprises part, but not all of Rost's quotation.

Thus the 'insistent question' taken by Rost to dominate the chapter is not in fact a direct quotation from the Hebrew text. Rather it is a hybrid reading of vv.20 and 27, supplemented by language found elsewhere in the chapter /21/. This observation is significant in itself, but the difficulties it creates for the Succession Narrative Hypothesis are further compounded by the fact that the 'quotation' is taken out of context. Neither verses 20 nor 27 is actually asking the question which Rost poses. In neither case is the phrase a direct question. Verse 20 forms part of Bathsheba's speech to the king. It reads:

"And now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are upon you, to tell them who shall sit upon the throne of my lord the king after him."

In verse 27 Nathan addresses David and says:

"Has this thing been brought about by my lord the king and you have not told your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

By presenting this as a direct question and separating it from its context, Rost dramatically alters its meaning and function.

Another weakness in the argument which is not generally identified concerns the actual theme of succession itself. Although he argues that this is a narrative composed on a single theme, Rost has to divide his succession theme into two distinct sections in order to make it fit the text. In reality there is not one single theme, but two separate 'succession' themes: the History of the Succession and the History of the Successor.

Immediately we may observe a distinct imbalance



between the length of these two sections: the History of the Successor is related in only three chapters (II Sam.10-12), while the History of the Succession takes up the remainder of the narrative and spans thirteen chapters. The link between the two themes is based solely on content and there is no structural support for identifying the two closely. Reference is never made to Solomon outside two verses in II Samuel 12 and the actual accession material of Kings 1-2, while Rost offers no explanation as to why the story of the Successor should be inserted into the middle of the Background to the Succession. Thus we might suggest that the succession to the throne, as presented by Rost, is not in fact a single unifying theme but that it is actually a synthesis of two quite different themes, presented together under the hybrid heading of 'succession'.

It is also possible to take exception to one of these strands, the Background to the Successor, at a much more basic level, for we may question whether II Sam.10-12 is in fact a history of the successor.

Chapters 10-12 give an account of the Ammonite War, David's adultery, his murder of Uriah, his confrontation with Nathan, and the death of the child of adultery. However Rost saw the account of Solomon's birth in 12:24-25 as the high point of the entire section. This is a short episode which records Solomon's conception and birth, states that he was "beloved by Yahweh", and spans only three lines of the Hebrew text. Nevertheless he regarded it as the climax of the section and as the sole purpose for recording all the events in chapters 10-12.

Yet as far as the literary structure and the content of the material is concerned, the record of Solomon's birth occupies only a minor position in these chapters. It is brief, lacks detail and does not expand upon any of the events it records. For example, we are not told why Yahweh loved Solomon; or that he would have any special future; or even that he survived infancy. Indeed the text would suffer no damage if it were to be omitted, for it is

self-contained and the story would function equally well without it.

If the primary purpose of chapters 10-12 was indeed record the circumstances of Solomon's birth, we might ask why the two-part Ammonite War should be included. Its function is generally regarded as being to set the scene for the events which were taking place in Jerusalem while the war was in progress. However this does not adequately explain why the narrative returns to this subject again in 12:26, for unless this war was a protracted affair Solomon must have been born long after David finally subdued Ammon. Indeed, regardless of time-scale, it is odd that if the Ammonite War is background to the adultery and murder, interest should again be centred on this early background after the initial events had been developed and the subsequent culmination of these events arrived at.

If the high-point of the narrative were the birth of Solomon (as Rost believes it to be), then the adultery, murder, confrontation with Nathan and death of the infant would be a background to Solomon's birth. Therefore the account of the Ammonite War would be the background to the background to the main interest of the section! Surely such a structure is too involved to be realistic.

Only II Sam.10-12 is placed under the heading 'History of the Successor'. All of the rest of Rost's Succession Narrative belongs to the 'History of the Succession'. Therefore we might consider that there is in fact no 'History of the Successor' for the chief interest of chs.10-12 does not lie in the birth of Solomon. Rather the entire section, including the Solomon verses, revolves around the account of David's adultery and murder. 12:24-25 is peripheral to this. We may suggest that the account of Solomon's birth is in fact a parenthesis which has been included here for two purposes. These were firstly, to show that David did obtain a measure of forgiveness from Yahweh in that despite the death of the

first child, its fate did not extend to Bathsheba's subsequent offspring; and secondly, as a comment which could be of interest to the audience in rounding off the story by linking it with David's successor, who would certainly be well known to them regardless of the function of succession in the narrative. Indeed McCarter, who also views the story of Solomon's birth as an appendix within chapters 10-12 comments that if we read the whole story for the sake of the appendix alone, we are in fact "letting the tail wag the dog" /23/.

Let us turn now to Rost's assessment of the relationship between I Kings 1-2 and the succession theme. Rost regarded the entire narrative as a build-up to the anointing and coronation of Solomon. Thus he saw I Kings 1-2 as the climax of the work. However these chapters do not at any time give the impression of being a 'grand finale' to the Succession Narrative, and although he claims that it is the zenith of the work, Rost treats it more as a conclusion than as a climax.

Again we encounter a situation where Rost finds the main theme and pivotal point of the Narrative only at its very end. Yet we would normally expect such a major theme to become apparent at a much earlier stage in any work. Undoubtedly 'succession', or perhaps more accurately, the accession of Solomon, is the overriding theme of the first two chapters of I Kings, but is this really true of the rest of the work?

It is doubtful whether, when viewed independently of I Kings 1-2, II Samuel 9-20 does in fact reflect the theme of succession. Conroy deals with this question in the context of his study of II Sam.13-20 /24/ and finds that when this material is treated independently, the succession theme never emerges. Thus he argues that succession is not an intrinsic element of chapters 13-20. We may suggest that this also applies to the preceding chapters, so that when I Sam.9-20 is read independently, succession is not a



significant feature of the narrative.

Moreover Rost's stress on I Kings 1-2 may create some difficulties in itself, for it is thus both conclusion and climax of the narrative - the focal point of the entire work. However it seems unnatural to place such a strong emphasis on material at the very end of a work. It gives the piece a somewhat unbalanced air, for in effect what Rost is saying is that the work consists of a very lengthy introduction (II Sam.9-20), followed by a comparatively brief section of major interest (I Kings 1-2).

Rost's view of theme leans heavily upon his analysis of these chapters. Yet neither chronologically nor stylistically is the relationship between II Sam.9-20 and Kings 1-2 so firmly rooted as he would imply. Worthy of note is the fact that the first two chapters of Kings are separated from the bulk of SN by the four chapters of the Samuel Appendix, found at the end of II Samuel. Thus we are once more reminded of Ackroyd's emphasis on the hypothetical nature of the argument. I Kings 1-2 does not follow on directly from II Sam.9-20, so their unity should not be assumed lightly, for if the Kings chapters were not part of SN, then the 'succession' idea would be seriously undermined. Rather it seems that the 'succession' theme has arisen as a result of too great an emphasis upon I Kings 1-2 and that an imbalanced view of the whole has resulted from this overemphasis.

Rost contended that the succession was the central idea in the work, constituting both its motivating force and subject matter. Yet as he has indicated, the orientation of a 'succession' theme must be away from the king, focusing attention either on the successor or the process of succession. However, on any examination of the narrative, it becomes clear that outside the Kings chapters, all of the stories are about King David and that it is he who is the central figure and main interest in the text.

If we accept the idea of 'succession', then we mustlegate David to a minor position in every episode. Thus should be Solomon who is the focus of attention in chapters 11-12, the death of Amnon should be the outstanding feature of chs.13-14, and the usurpers should be the main interest of chs.15-20. However none of these suggestions offer viable readings of the material.

In chapters 10-12 we have seen that the text concentrates on the adultery and murder and thus attention is focused firmly upon the person of David.

In chs.13 and 14 the death of Amnon is of some importance to the story and to the sequence of events, nevertheless it is not given the attention which would be warranted by the death of the heir presumptive in a chronicle of the succession to the throne. Rather the text is more interested in his rape of Tamar and in the vengeance taken by Absalom. The murder is recounted in 13:28-29, but the text concentrates more on the preparations made by Absalom than in the actual deed itself. Indeed even David's grief is abated when he realizes that it is only one son, Amnon, who was killed, and not all the princes as he had originally feared.

Even in the story of Absalom's Rebellion the emphasis is not that of a succession narrative. In chs.15-19, Absalom only figures in a relatively small proportion of the text: the rest of the material is concerned solely with David. His retreat from, and return to Jerusalem are described in great detail, and while the bulk of chapters 16 and 19 is ostensibly about the battle against Absalom's forces, it includes an extensive account of David's grief at the death of his son.

Nor is there any discussion or suggestion of the idea of succession in the story of Sheba ben Bichri's revolt in 20. Rost suggests that its purpose is to air the possibility that little of David's kingdom might be left

for his successor. Attention however, is not centred upon this, but upon Joab's murder of Amasa and the action of the wise woman in Abel-Bethmaacah. There is no mention of David's successor or his future inheritance here. Indeed it would seem to be an odd point at which to discuss the succession - when David has just regained his own kingdom. The text is not interested in the succession here, but in the re-establishment of David's position.

Thus we may see that the interest of the narrator is firmly centered upon the person of David up until I Kings 1. His attention is concentrated on the king at the expense of the factors which would be central in an excursus on the theme of succession. Therefore we may suggest that Rost's view of theme is not an accurate reflection of the content and nature of II Samuel 9-20.

Let us draw to a conclusion then. In the foregoing discussion, we have attempted to illustrate that the notion of II Sam.9-20 and I Kings 1-2 as a narrative composed on the theme of succession is not unproblematic. Initially we found that even if the firstborn was the natural successor, the Succession Narrative is still incomplete in recording the elimination of only three of Solomon's nine older brothers. Then we looked more specifically at the difficulties which are encountered with Rost's reasoning in advocating this view. Here we found that:

1. There is no repeated verbal expression of the theme in I Kings 1 as Rost claims;
2. there is no single succession theme, only two quite distinct strands which he relates to this idea;
3. his strong emphasis on the importance of I Kings 1-2 as the climax of the story does not coincide with the natural emphases of the narrative; and
4. his approach to the material undermines the role of David in the text.



Therefore the idea of succession as the main theme of II Sam. 9-20 and I Kings 1-2 entails grave difficulties. Indeed we must suggest that it cannot be maintained as a plausible reading of the text, and that the title "Succession Narrative" is a misnomer, according a significance to this theme which far surpasses its natural function in the work.

NOTES

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- 11 D.M. Gunn, The Story of King David. Genre and Interpretation, JSOTS 6, Sheffield: JSOT, 1978.
- 12 J.P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel. Vol.I:King David (II Sam.9-20 & I Kings 1-2), Assen: van Gorcum, 1981, see especially pp.427ff.
- 13 Noted also by J.J. Jackson, "David's Throne: Patterns in the Succession Story," Canadian Journal of Theology 11 (1965), p.185; Gunn, op. cit. p.136n.54.
- 14 However even if the second list is not in order of birth, Solomon can only be advanced to seventh position and Chileab, Shephatiah and Ithream still precede him.
- 15 See for example: J.A. Montgomery and H.S. Gehman, The Books of Kings, ICC, Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1951, p.72.
- 16 Cf. Deut.21:15ff.
- 17 So N.K. Gottwald, The Tribes of Yahweh. A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel, 1250-1050 C.E., London: SCM, 1980, 286f.
- 18 Cf. I Samuel 14.
- 19 Rost, 1982:68.
- 20 For example, T.C.G. Thornton, "Solomonic Apologetic in

Samuel and Kings," Church Quarterly Review 169 (1968), pp.159-166, suggested that the question underlying the Succession Narrative was not "Who will succeed to the throne of David," but was in fact "Why was it Solomon who succeeded David to the throne?"

I Kings 1:13, 17 and 30 all contain the expression:

כי-שלמה בנך ימלך אחרי והוא ישב על-כסאי

This also bears a distinct resemblance to Rost's 'quotation'.

II Sam.6:16, 20ff.; 7:11b, 16; 9; 13-20; I Kings 1-2.

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llian Keys is a Doctoral Student and Tutor in the  
pt of Semitic Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast



R.N. Whybray, The Making of the Pentateuch. A Methodological Study, (J.S.O.T. Supplement Series 53) Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987, pp. 263.

Since the initial observations of Jean Astruc in 1753 on the memoirs used by Moses for the composition of the book of Genesis, no issue in the study of the Old Testament has received more attention than that of the origin of the Pentateuch. Following the publication, just over a century ago, of Julius Wellhausen's masterly study, Geschichte Israels, I, Marburg, 1878 (second edition, Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels, Berlin, 1883; English translation, Prolegomena to the History of Israel, Edinburgh, 1885) biblical scholars have by and large adopted his solution to the literary sources which comprise the Pentateuch. Consequently, in the intervening years scholarly interest has switched mainly to the pre-literary stage in the growth of the Pentateuch. To this end form-criticism and tradition-criticism have been widely applied. Professor Whybray's assessment of the present state of affairs is a sobering reminder of the very tentative nature of the hypotheses, regarding the origin of the Pentateuch, constructed by these differing approaches.

The first major section of his book examines the validity of the Documentary Hypothesis as propounded by Wellhausen and widely adopted by Old Testament scholars today. Whybray highlights the presuppositions underlying this approach, the criteria by which the Pentateuch is analysed into continuous parallel documents (i.e., language and style; repetitions, duplications and contradictions; differences of culture, religion and theology), and the role of redactors. His conclusion is unequivocal: "The Documentary Hypothesis has feet of clay. It rests on false assumptions and methodological errors which render it fundamentally untenable" (p. 129).

He next examines efforts to reconstruct the oral stage

the development of the Pentateuch. After considering appropriateness of using foreign models (e.g., Olrik's 'folk laws'; Jolles study of Icelandic sagas) for determining the process by which the Pentateuch grew orally, Whybray discusses the findings of recent research on the relationship between oral and written compositions. He then assesses the tradition-historical approaches of previous scholars (e.g., Noth, Engnell, Fohrer, Rendtorff, etc.). As with the Documentary Hypothesis, Whybray is extremely critical of existing endeavours to delineate the full development of the Pentateuch. His study raises real doubts about the possibility of distinguishing material which has an oral origin from that which was composed only after writing. Indeed he is persuaded that there is no compelling reason to think that the Pentateuch, or any earlier form of it, was created through the process of oral composition. Such a conclusion clearly undermines totally the very foundation undergirding form-critical and tradition-historical studies of the Pentateuch.

By arguing that the Documentary Hypothesis and tradition-historical approaches to the Pentateuch must be rejected on methodologically grounds, Whybray demolishes some of the major edifices of modern biblical scholarship. Having done so, what does he suggest should be constructed in their place? Here Whybray's study becomes more tentative. No attempt is made to construct a detailed alternative to the Documentary Hypothesis. Rather he offers a sketch outline of how he sees the way ahead.

On the basis of recent studies by, among others, Rendtorff and van Seters, Whybray is persuaded that a single author was responsible for the present form of the Pentateuch. He was an 'historian' interested in providing a record of the origins of the world and of Israel, who composed his account in the sixth century B.C. as a prologue or introduction to the work of the Deuteronomistic historian. Although he incorporated already existing material, he not only reworked this extensively, but also included additions of his own invention.

The strength of Whybray's study lies in his assessment of the Documentary Hypothesis and the traditio-historical method. This is the most comprehensive recent discussion on the validity of these approaches. His critique of the methodologies is penetrating, highlighting presuppositions and assumptions which have by and large gone unchallenged. Unfortunately, he fails to assess as vigorously those assumptions on which he bases his alternative hypothesis. We may ask if the Histories of Herodotus really provides a suitable analogy for the process by which a Hebrew author composed the books of Genesis to Numbers? Furthermore, does the book of Deuteronomy not presuppose the existence of an account comparable to that now found in Genesis to Numbers? Was the Tetrateuch actually composed after the Deuteronomistic History as a supplement? Clearly, the suggestion that a sixth-century historian penned the Pentateuch raises major additional problems.

Whybray's endeavour to demolish the Documentary Hypothesis will certainly meet with resistance. Nevertheless, the time has surely come for either a major renovation of the existing hypothesis, or the construction of a new one. Having cleared the ground for the erection of a new theory on the origin of the Pentateuch, it remains to be seen if Whybray will succeed in being the architect of a new approach.

The Queen's University of Belfast.

T.D. Alexander



David L. Petersen (Ed), Prophecy in Israel (Issues in Religion and Theology: no.10)

SPCK, London, 1987

177 pp

As with all the volumes in this series, Prophecy in Israel is a collection of "key studies, all previously published, which have contributed significantly to our present understandings" (p ix). As Petersen himself puts it in his introduction, the aim has not been to "survey and summarise all that has been published", but to focus on the "central issues that require study" (p 2). The two key questions which for Petersen "drive the study of Israelite prophecy" are: "How does one think about the identity of the prophet, and how does one understand prophetic literature?" (p 2). Petersen's selection of material is more concerned with the former question than with the latter: though, "since the Hebrew Bible contains prophetic literature, not prophets" (p 3), some attention is given to the latter question also.

One of the most valuable features of this collection of essays, is that two classical pieces are published for the first time in English - namely, "The prophets as writers and poets" by Hermann Gunkel (first published in Die Propheten, 1923) and "Cult and Prophecy" by Sigmund Mowinckel (first published in Psalmenstudien 111, 1922).

Petersen's introductory chapter gives a valuable overview of the issues and questions that have dominated the study of Israelite prophecy since the turn of the century, highlighting six distinct models for understanding the complexity of the prophetic roles in ancient Israel.

The first two essays in the collection of studies which follows are the classical articles (already referred to) by Gunkel and Mowinckel. The Gunkel essay of course stresses the importance of identifying the concept of "genre" for a prophetic utterance. It is the longest of the essays in the collection, and is a well chosen piece to give a penetrating insight into the thinking of the man whose name is so closely associated with Form Criticism. The Mowinckel article sets out his understanding of the relation of prophecy to the cult (associating prophecy with the sacramental as

distinct from the sacrificial aspect of the cult), and also deals with topics such as the relationship of the priest to the seer and the 'nabi' - the latter "demonstrably of non-Israelite origin" (p 79). The article also highlights Mowinckel's valuable insights into cultic prophecy and the writing of the Psalms.

The second main group of essays in the collection begins with Max Weber's "The Prophet" (original German, 1922), which seeks to approach the question 'What is a prophet?' from the point of view of sociology. His thesis is that "personal call is the main element distinguishing the prophet from the priest", the prophet's claim being based on "personal revelation and charisma"; and he illustrates this with a wide range of examples from the Israelite tradition, from the ANE, and from other major world religious movements. The next two articles, "The Prophet and Yahweh's messenger" by James F Ross (1962), and "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel" by John S Holladay (1970), both take the primary role of the prophet to be as "messenger" from the heavenly court. Numerous ANE examples are cited as to the role of the official messenger of the oriental court as it can be paralleled with the prophetic role. Holladay in particular raises the question of the shift in prophetic emphasis from the 9th and 10th centuries to the 7th and 8th centuries, in that the earlier prophets address themselves primarily to the ruling houses of the twin kingdoms, whereas the later prophets address themselves more to the peoples as a whole. Holladay closely associates this with a change in Assyrian imperial policy at that time, making the entire population of a subject nation responsible for its actions, so that while messengers continued to go from king to king they also acted as heralds proclaiming the will of the suzerain to the people of the land (eg the speech of the Rabshakeh outside the gate of Jerusalem). Holladay makes out a most convincing case along these lines; and certainly shows how closely the prophetic messenger role was modelled on the practice of the "great kings" of the ANE. Of course, if the prophets are to be seen as messengers, it is important to consider not just their role and function but also the content of their message. The more recent (1983) essay by James L. Mayes ("Justice: Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition") examines one theme, justice, which he maintains to be central to the prophetic message. Petersen includes Mayes' essay as an example of what he calls "the middle range thematic approach" (p 16). Mayes discusses the theme of justice from several points of view, commenting on the distinction between 'justice' and 'righteousness', the conflict of legality and righteousness, the

central issue (in the Israelite context) of land and its ownership, and the relationship between wealth and wickedness. Mayes concentrates on the 8th century; and Petersen invites the reader "to engage in a similar exercise as regards other Israelite prophets to determine whether the theme that Mayes highlights in eighth-century prophets is an essential feature of other prophetic literature as well" (p 17).

The final essay in the collection is "The Role of the Prophets and the Role of the Church" by Gene M Tucker (1981). Emphasising the need for a prophetic role for the Church, for which role the OT prophets will serve as an essential model, he warns against simplistic one-sided notions of the ancient prophet (eg visionary mystic, social reformer, seer who predicts the future), none of which on its own is the complete picture. If, however, the prophetic role has to be summed up in a sentence, the prophet for Tucker was one "who spoke God's word for the immediate future ... and what he spoke was - for the most part - announcement of judgement or of salvation" (p 170).

The purpose of the overall collection is well summed up by the editor:-

"This volume will have served its purpose if the reader has felt the force of the classical positions of Gunkel, Mowinckel, and Weber, if the reader has understood the way in which Ross's and Holladay's essays contribute to our understanding of one model for prophetic identity, if the reader takes Mayes' essay as an occasion to reflect on ... a prophetic message that is larger than the message of one prophet, and finally, after having read Tucker's article, to ask again the question: What is central in Israelite prophecy, and what might it be to think or act from a prophetic perspective in one's own time?" (p 18)

Overall this volume will serve as an invaluable introduction for the student to the main scholars and to the main issues and questions in the recent study of OT prophecy; and for those who wish to delve further, the Bibliography is comprehensive and will provide an excellent resource.

J Patton Taylor,  
Duncairn and St. Enoch's Manse, Belfast.



D. Gareth Jones, Manufacturing Humans: The Challenge of the New Productive Technologies

IVPress 269 pp pb £7.95

The word "manufacturing" the author explains has been used deliberately "because the fertilization of human ova in the laboratory is more akin to factory production than to a human sexual activity." (p.1) In this opening chapter Professor Jones (Professor of Anatomy at Otago, NZ) describes various ways of producing a child - six natural, and thirteen in which technology is required in order to reach the stage of fertilisation and implantation. The possibilities of manipulation of the embryo in research, and even of parenthood without pregnancy, demand ethical investigation.

Chapter two reviews "Responses to the New Productive Technologies", such as "Warnock", and also the contemporary debate emanating from various ethical and theological standpoints. "Perspectives on Human Life" are drawn from the Bible which supplies basic rules and specific moral principles eg the dignity of human life. "Human life is a biological phenomenon but it also involves a relationship to God and his purposes and to one another." (p65) Humans, being in the image of God, have a moral responsibility. Their dignity rests, not on their accomplishments but on the fact of God's love for them. The Bible also stresses social justice. For Prof. Jones, love is the essence of the moral law. Having reviewed, in the biblical perspective, pro-creation, infertility, childlessness and adoption, and the nature of the family, he concludes that "the fundamental questions from a Christian perspective can then be seen to centre not so much on (sic!) the technology per se, but on the context in which it is used and the family environment in which the offspring will be raised." (93)

Chapter four treats of the foetus, beginning with a description of the embryo and foetus, which is very helpful to the non-medical reader; likewise a description of the brain. The question of the personhood of the foetus is given very careful attention. The relevant biblical passages are reviewed but these are considered not so relevant to the "general principle relating to the status of all foetuses" because they concern people "who emerged as.... significant in God's kingdom." (127) Further, the Bible tells us nothing about pregnancy wastage nor about precisely when life begins, nor about individuality of the unborn. The Bible can take us to principles which "provide us with hints about how we should view embryonic and foetal life." (134). The writer reviews various attitudes to the foetus - person, non-person, potential person, this last being his own position. This involves protection of the foetus but this protection is complicated by pregnancy wastage.

The next question, our freedom to bring life into existence, is answered by consideration of AID, IVF and surrogacy. Of these the writer only approves of IVF for a married couple from their own ova and sperm. There follows an examination of our freedom to manipulate human life, through research on embryonic pre-implantation, and also on foetuses.

The final chapter, "Certainties and Quandaries" is largely a set of conclusions which can be drawn from the book's thorough examination of the new productive technologies. Since infertility is an illness for a married couple it should be accepted as such. Then a section on "Reflections on Christian attitudes" which is aimed at helping people towards "accepting uncertainties" and "establishing certainties". Further the ten points offered to a Christian couple who have an infertility problem include some methods which Dr Jones has rejected; he leaves the Christian couple to make their own decision. This is a mature ethical position.

May I mention two aspects of the book which disturbed me. Prof. Jones stands firmly in the Christian tradition and very clearly in the medical world. He gladly accepts the results of IVF research but is ethically unhappy about the production of embryos which will not be implanted in the uterus of the woman from whom the ova came. He looks forward to the day when a single ovum from a wife can be fertilized in vitro by the sperm of her husband and returned to her uterus. This requires more research of the type which has up to the present produced spare embryos. Prof. Jones seems to judge that the end justifies the means.

Another disturbing aspect is the omission of cost. The writer recognizes that he lives in one of the affluent nations of the Pacific. He claims that reproductive research will lead to the lowerings of infant mortality rates among the poorer nations for whose children "even the most basic of medical resources are unavailable" (78). Simple hygiene and basic medical care could reduce the infant mortality rates within a year at much less cost than IVF programmes.

Finally, there are surely sentences that cannot mean what they say. eg., "Human life should always be characterized by the potential to transcend what one is at present. For the individual this entails the potential to become more fully human in all aspects of one's life - in matters of health...." (75). For those who are in poor health or who are already in senile decay what does this imply?

A helpful book medically for the general reader but in need of hospitalization for ethical and linguistic check-ups

Edgehill College  
Belfast

James McCormack

D.A. Carson & John D. Woodbridge, (Eds), Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon, IVPress 1986 £9.95

The book is a symposium of essays, dealing with the authority of the Bible in general and with the thesis of inerrancy in particular. The essays are written from a conservative point of view and in a scholarly fashion. There are three aspects where their findings are especially helpful in the ongoing debate.

First, there are valuable comments in terms of defining the subject under discussion. The essays attempt to give the meaning of inerrancy but go beyond this to draw the parameters within which the debate may legitimately proceed. The historico-critical method



is not always inimical to the authority of scripture. Conservatives have for too long fought the battle with their backs to the wall and feared using this method when it might well have proved advantageous to their case.

This is why source, form and redaction criticism are not to be discounted out of hand but used to establish scripture's veracity. Both deductive and inductive approaches may yield profitable results. The variety of literary genres in scripture highlights the "humanness" of scripture, a feature not necessarily at variance with its divine authorship. The significance of canonicity and particularly those perceptions from which it arose are relevant to the debate. Theological categories especially the theme of salvation-history contribute to the unravelling of some of the problems. The full scale use of such methodology, as I see it, presents the danger of accepting many of the presuppositions on which it rests. The essayists recognize this.

Secondly, the essays provide an informative historical framework as a background for interaction on inerrancy. The Jewish concept of the authority of scripture and rabbinic methods of exegesis are noted as well as patristic evidence. The Reformation period is naturally dealt with much more fully, including the "self-authenticating" character of the Bible and the "sola Scriptura" theme. The question as to whether the posit of inerrancy arose as a reaction to the Enlightenment or not is ably discussed and rejected. Inerrancy it is claimed predates both the Enlightenment and the Reformation. It is found from the earliest days of Christianity even if not consciously articulated. There is an excellent assessment of Karl Barth's position which is most helpful in seeking to understand the stance of contemporary scholars like James Barr on the subject.

Thirdly, specific problems within the debate are dealt with seriously and scholarly. An excursus on the nature of Pharisaism and on the conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christianity amplifies the reconstruction of events from biblical data. The legitimacy of harmonisation deals with various methods from the simply additive to redaction criticism with examples from the synoptics, Kings/Chronicles, Josephus and the biographies of Alexander the Great. The "Sensus plenior" of the fulfilment of the OT in the NT is not to be limited to one answer but is best approached from a broad "canonical" point of view. Canonicity in general is to be traced neither purely to the selfauthenticating character of scripture nor baldly to the ruling of Church Councils but within the meaningful context of salvation-history.

In all, these well-written and scholarly essays provide much help and stimulus to those grappling with the important subject of the inerrancy of scripture.

Trinity Manse  
Ahoghill

Harry Uprichard